

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 08826 121933Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSY-02 MCT-01 /069 W
-----086077 122026Z /73

P R 121831Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2751
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: MAY ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS

REF: ROME 7381

1. MORO'S MURDER AND ITS AFTERMATH HAVE OVERWHELMED THE
ADMINISTRATIVE (LOCAL) ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON MAY 14-15.
THE CAMPAIGN ITSELF HAS BEEN DECIDEDLY MUTED AND FEW POLITICIANS,
POLLSTERS, OR JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN WILLING TO PREDICT THE
OUTCOME. THE ELECTIONS INVOLVE APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT OF THE
ELECTORATE. IN THE CAMPAIGN, THE DC IS ATTEMPTING TO PRESENT
AN IMAGE OF A PARTY THAT, WHILE UNDER CONTINUING TERRORIST
ATTACK (MOST OF THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE OF THE PAST YEAR HAS
BEEN AIMED AT THE DC), HAS REMAINED TRUE TO ITS TASK
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OF RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT AND DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION.
NOT TO BE OUTDONE, THE COMMUNISTS, BOTH IN THE
ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND APART FROM IT, PORTRAY THEMSELVES
AS THE MOST THOROUGHLY ANTI-TERRORIST, PRO-LAW AND
ORDER PARTY IN THE COUNTRY. THE LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES
ARE STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF "UNITY" IN THESE
UNCERTAIN TIMES, A MESSAGE WHICH TROUBLES MANY WHO ARE

CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING ROLE OF THE PCI IN THE GOVERNING OF ITALY.

2. THE GENERAL EXPECTATION APPEARS TO BE THAT, IN THESE ELECTIONS, BOTH THE DC AND THE PCI WILL GAIN SLIGHTLY (AS COMPARED TO THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION) AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SMALLER PARTIES. ONLY A MAJOR SHIFT IN VOTING PATTERNS WILL BE INTERPRETED AND ACCEPTED AS HAVING SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE NATIONAL POLITICAL SCENE. SUCH A MAJOR SHIFT IS NOT EXPECTED AND, INDEED, BOTH THE DC AND PCI SEEM TO WISH TO AVOID IT. THE DC TRADITIONALLY DOES LESS WELL IN LOCAL AS COMPARED TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS. LOCAL ISSUES WILL AFFECT MANY CONTESTS. IN THE END, MOST PARTIES ARE LIKELY TO FIND SOME BASIS FOR CLAIMING THAT THE RESULTS WERE GOOD OR, AT LEAST, NOT TOO BAD. THEY WILL THEN TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE POST-MORO SITUATION WHICH WILL BE, INITIALLY AT LEAST, AN INTERNAL DC PROBLEM BUT WHICH EVERYONE RECOGNIZES WILL IN THE END AFFECT THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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